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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 000691

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ENRG](#) [PL](#) [GM](#)  
SUBJECT: POLAND-GERMANY: (C-RE7-00514) MERKEL'S SPRING  
VISIT STARTS A THAW

REF: WARSAW 00597

Classified By: Polcouns Mary T. Curtin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

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Summary  
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[¶1.](#) (U) German Chancellor Angela Merkel's March 16-17 visit to Poland was deemed a great success by both sides, and could prove an important step in warming previously frosty bilateral relations (reftel). By declaring opposition to the claims of German WWII expellees on Polish land Merkel earned gratitude across the Polish political spectrum, even though PM Jaroslaw Kaczynski lamented that her statements still did not go far enough. One of Merkel's top priorities was the EU constitutional treaty, and she convinced President Kaczynski to accept the current draft as a starting point for negotiations, and to agree to a reference to the draft in the Berlin Declaration at the upcoming EU summit. President Kaczynski reportedly was firm in asserting that Missile Defense is an appropriate U.S.-Polish bilateral endeavor, but acknowledged Germany's "right" to express reservations about the so-far bilateral nature of Missile Defense in Poland. Kaczynski expressed appreciation for Merkel's support of Poland's energy security concerns, but reportedly rejected her offer to extend the planned Russian-German gas pipeline to Poland. END SUMMARY.

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Arrival Speech Sets the  
Right Tone  
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[¶2.](#) (U) Chancellor Merkel set the right tone in her March 16 opening speech at Warsaw University, at which she expressed her appreciation for Poland's role in ending communism and declared her government's opposition to claims on Polish land by Germans expelled in the wake of the Second World War, one of the touchiest issues in Polish-German relations. While many political leaders, such as Sejm Deputy Mateusz Piskorski of the populist Self Defense party (SO), were very positive about Merkel's pledge, the PM, President, and others insisted her words did not go far enough. Bronislaw Komorowski of Citizens Platform (PO) took a more demanding tone that was later reiterated by PM Kaczynski. Both said they appreciated Merkel's statement but thought she should undertake to change German law so as to completely prohibit such claims against Poland. President Kaczynski further added that he did not raise the issue in the March 16-17 meetings, but said he favored a joint declaration by the two governments on the issue.

[¶3.](#) (U) Merkel also signaled in her speech the importance of moving forward on the EU constitutional treaty, declaring that the time for reflection on the EU Constitution had passed while the time for action had come. She also emphasized the importance of further EU integration and

improvements in EU competitiveness, and reaffirmed the importance Germany attaches to NATO. Her words were generally well-received. Sejm Deputy Wojciech Olejniczak, leader of the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) echoed Merkel's call when he noted that, "There is no time to waste as Angela Merkel has expressed her understanding that by 2009 the most important decision regarding the future of the European Union must be undertaken." The Catholic nationalist League of Polish Family's (LPR) Wojciech Wierzejski, however, maintained his party's "skepticism" and declared that Poland "is not at fault" in this disagreement.

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Extended Talks Friendly  
With Progress on EU Constitution  
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14. (U) On day two, at the President's seaside retreat in Jurata, Lech Kaczynski and Angela Merkel came to agreement on the basis for discussing a future EU Constitution. President Kaczynski promised that Poland would sign the Berlin Declaration at the upcoming summit, which accepts the current text as the basis for negotiation, even though it lacks Poland's hoped-for statement on Europe's common Christian heritage. He went on to declare that Poland would enthusiastically join work on the EU Constitution in return for Chancellor Merkel's promise to include a statement on shared energy security, and added that he did not want Poland to be the only hold-out country.

15. (C) Before her arrival, Merkel had declared that Missile Defense should be a NATO-wide project undertaken in close consultation with Russia, raising concerns that MD would be a contentious issue during the visit. MFA Security Policy

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Director Robert Kupiecki told DCM that the president held firm on Poland's position that the project was a valid bilateral undertaking, while acknowledging Merkel's point that it would be useful to have further consultations on the broad subject at NATO. In his press statements President Kaczynski noted that, "Our ally and neighbor has the right to question and present their arguments," but that ultimately Missile Defense is a bilateral issue.

16. (U) Energy security was also on the table, with Kaczynski convincing Merkel that the constitutional treaty should include reference to it. However, nothing was resolved on the contentious issue of the planned Russian-German gas pipeline, which would bypass Poland by running under the Baltic Sea. Kaczynski reportedly rejected Merkel's offer to have the pipeline extended from Germany to Poland, an offer previously made by Germany and rejected by Poland because it would do nothing to lessen Poland's dependence upon Russian supplies.

17. (C) COMMENT: Merkel's stated opposition to German claims on Polish land, Poland's support for the Berlin Declaration and the EU Constitution, and the apparent calmness of the agreement to disagree on Missile Defense signal a first step in the much hoped-for improvement in German-Polish relations. Our German and Polish interlocutors, as well as the press in both countries, have all declared Merkel's visit a success and noted the feeling of "friendship" that prevailed in the Merkel-Kaczynski meetings. Given the problems previously caused by the Kaczynskis' prickliness over relations, the pressure drop in German-Polish relations triggered by Merkel's visit may indicate the awakening of spring between Berlin and Warsaw. There are some tough issues and sensitivities that remain, but the visit demonstrated a recognition on both sides of the importance to both countries of positive relations. END COMMENT.  
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